Biography of Lawrence D. Burns Vice President, Research & Development and Strategic Planning General Motors Corporation



Larry Burns is vice president of Research & Development and Strategic Planning for General Motors Corporation. In this post, he oversees GM's advanced technology and innovation programs and corporate strategy. He is a member of GM's Automotive Strategy and Automotive Product Boards.

In addition to driving innovation into today's vehicles, Burns is championing GM's "reinvention" of the automobile around advanced propulsion, electronics, telematics, and materials technologies. The goal is to realize sustainable mobility with vehicles that are aspirational and affordable.

Burns holds a Ph.D. in civil engineering from the University of California at Berkeley. He also has an M.S. degree in engineering/public policy from the University of Michigan and a B.S. in mechanical engineering from General Motors Institute (now Kettering University).

Burns began his GM career in 1969 as a co-op student while working toward his bachelor's degree. He progressed through increasingly responsible research assignments, ultimately attaining GM's highest technical position, principal research engineer. His research focused on transportation, logistics, and production systems.

From May 1988 to December 1995, Burns held various executive positions in several GM business units, during which time he had management responsibility in the areas of product program management, quality, production control, industrial engineering, and product and business planning. From January 1996 until May 1998, he served as executive director for planning for GM North America, directing the development of GM's North American product plan. He was named a GM vice president in May 1998.

Burns is a member of the Executive Steering Committee of the FreedomCAR Partnership and the Operating Council of USCAR. He also serves on the University of Michigan College of Engineering National Advisory Council and the board of U-M's Automotive Research Center.

In 2000, Burns received Kettering University's Engineering Alumni Achievement Award for his contributions to the engineering profession. In 2002, the Deafness Research Foundation recognized him with its National Campaign for Hearing Health Leadership Award. In April 2005, he was a member of a General Motors team awarded the Franz Edelman Award from the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences. Burns is also the recipient of the 2005 Alumni Merit Award from the University of Michigan Industrial and Operations Engineering Department. In September 2005, he will complete a two-year term as National Honorary Chairman for MATHCOUNTS.

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